REMARKS

Claims 1-16, 28-49 and 53 were presented for examination and were pending in this application. The Examiner rejected claims 1-16, 28-33, 35-44, 49 and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,389,127 to Vardi et al. ("Vardi")[1]; rejected claim 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vardi; and rejected claims 45-48 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Vardi in view of the cited MicroSoft NetMeeting document.

Applicant herein amends claims 1, 9, 28, 32, and 53 and adds new claims 54-69.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-16, 28-33, 35-44, 49 and 53 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,389,127 to Vardi. Applicant disagrees with this rejection.

Claim 1 and Dependent Claims

Claim 1 as amended recites:

1. A computer-implemented method for the intermediation of real time meetings, comprising:

receiving an indication by a requester system that a requester wants to request a realtime meeting with a target;

sending to the target a request to conduct a real time meeting;

after sending the request, sending by the requester system an availability status of the requester;

queuing the request by the requester system; and

connecting the requester and the target when the requester and the target are mutually available.

[1] The Examiner's statement on page 3, paragraph 2, of the Office Action that claims 17-27, 49, and 53 are rejected is assumed to be a typographical error since some of these claims are not pending.

In the method of claim 1, after sending a request to the target, the requester also sends a status of the requester to the target. Thus, a requester Alice might send a request for a meeting to a target Bob. Even though Alice has requested a meeting, Alice may not actually be available at the time she sends the request. Sending the request does not indicate Alice's availability. Next, Alice may next send an availability status, e.g., available or not-available. Mere sending of a request for a meeting does not signify Alice's availability status in the method of claim 1. She must send her availability status separately if she wishes Bob to know it.

The sections of Vardi noted by the Examiner fail to disclose at least sending by the requester system an availability status of the requester (after sending the meeting request). Col. 2, lines 65-67; Col. 3, lines 1-9; 15-28, and 40-45, and Col. 8, lines 1-6 of Vardi state that the requesting terminal has a "telephone line status" and that sought user initiates the call once the seeking user telephone line status "has been determined." No mention is made of how such a status is determined. This portion of Vardi is clearly discussing determination of physical line availability since it mentions callback in each section cited by the Examiner and refers not just to a "status" but to a "line status." It does not disclose or suggest that the line status is sent by the seeking user to the sought user. Indeed, it is more probable that the sought user requests a status when dealing with line availability, since the sought user will place a call if the line is available. Moreover, Vardi's disclosure of "telephone line status" is not the same as the "availability status of the requester" of claim 1.

The Examiner additionally points to Col. 7, lines 25-30 and 49-67 of Vardi. Applicant does not find language in these sections stating that a requesting system sends

a request for a meeting and then, additionally, sends an availability status of the requester. At best, the cited sections disclose that various types of status information can be supplied in response to a status request from the seeking user in Vardi. For example, the seeking user can request a status of a monitor. Vardi also indicates that the requested status can be a logical status of a user (Col. 7, lines 29-30). It is clear, however, that this is a logical status entered by a sought user such as user 12 of Fig. 1. See Vardi, Col. 6, lines 26-32.

Dependent claims 2-8 depend from claim 1 and are patentable for at least the same reason as claim 1.

Moreover, new dependent claim 54 recites that the availability status sent to the target system is displayed on the target system, along with an indication that the requester has requested a meeting. An example of such an embodiment of the present invention is shown, for example, in Applicant's Fig. 9(e). In this Figure, a left-most column shows an availability status of a calling user. As recited in new claim 55, this availability status can be in, out, or unknown.

New claims 56 and 57 recite similar language for the requester system.

Claims 9, 28, 32, and 53

Each of independent claims 9, 28, 32, and 53, as amended, recites language relating to sending of an availability status of a requester by a requester system (or receiving of such an availability status by a target). These claims and their dependent claims 10-16, 29-31, and 33-49 are patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in conjunction with claim 1.

Claim 34

The Examiner rejected claim 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vardi. As discussed above, claim 34 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 32, from which it depends. The Examiner contends that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Vardi to remove meetings from a queue. If the Examiner is relying on personal knowledge as a basis for the motivation of one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, the Examiner is respectfully requested to submit an affidavit to support this personal knowledge.

Claims 45-48

The Examiner rejected claims 45-48 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Vardi in view of the cited MicroSoft NetMeeting document. As discussed above, claims 45-48 are patentable at least for the same reasons as claim 32.

The Examiner acknowledges that Vardi does not disclose at least text chat, an online collaboration tool, or a shared application. Applicant does not believe that the cited art contains motivation for the Examiner's suggested combination. The Examiner's only stated motivation for the combination is based entirely on hindsight: "incorporation of these old and well-known capabilities would have increased the usefulness of the product to potential buyers." Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner provide a location in the cited documents that provide motivation for the suggested combination. Merely stating a conclusion that the suggested combination would have improved the product does not provide sufficient motivation. Moreover, Applicant does not concur that the suggested combination could have been made or that it would have yielded

applicant's claimed invention, as few details have been offered as to exactly how such a combination would function.

Additional new claims

Claim 58 and it dependent claims relate to a user interface such as that shown in Figs 9(e) and 9(f).

Claim 64 and its dependent claims relate to a user interface such as that shown in Figs. 9(e) and 9(f).

Conclusion

In sum, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims, as presented herein, are patentably distinguishable over the cited reference (including references cited, but not applied). Therefore, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of these claims.

In addition, Applicant respectfully invites Examiner to contact Applicant's representative at the number provided below if Examiner believes it will help expedite furtherance of this application.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
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